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Sustainable development: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Letter dated 3 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the Dushanbe Declaration adopted at the close of the International Conference on Water-Related Disaster Reduction held in Dushanbe on 27 and 28 June 2008 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly under item 52 (c) of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Sirodjidin **Aslov**
Permanent Representative

* A/63/150 and Corr.1.

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Annex to the letter dated 3 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and Russian]

Dushanbe declaration on water-related disaster reduction

Water-related disasters account for the vast majority of all disasters triggered by natural events. T growing social and economic impacts of disasters are immense, with hundreds of thousands of liv lost and millions of people affected. It is the poorest countries and the poorest people who a disproportionately affected.

Water-related disasters are serious impediments to sustainable development, since they quick destroy the gains of development. Still, there is a continued need for strengthening of cooperation regional and international levels, involving actors from the water, disaster risk reduction, clima change and other important socio-economic and environmental sectors.

We, the participants of the International Conference on Water Related Disasters Reduction, Dushanb Tajikistan, 27-29 June 2008, which was held within the framework of the International Decade f Action «Water for Life», 2005-2015, representing governments, international and regio organizations, academia, the private sector and civil society at large would like to:

express our deep concern about the increase of water- related disasters, such as floods, drough landslides and cyclones, which continue to cause heavy losses, taking human lives, and destroyi livelihoods, and express our deepest sympathy to the people and communities who suffered fr natural disasters;

recognize the urgency of reducing the risks of water-related disasters since they threaten t achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

further recognize that the risks of water-related disasters increase as a result of climate variability a change;

reiterate *our commitment* to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and t recommendations contained in the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit;

recognize the important role of United Nations agencies and mechanisms relevant to water-relat disaster risk reduction and management and promoting international cooperation for disaster ri reduction;

stress the importance of strengthening regional cooperation among Central Asian countries on wat related disaster reduction;

welcome the continued assistance from development partners for mitigating the impacts of ecologic disasters in the Aral Sea Basin.

declare our willingness and being firmly resolved to work together towards meeting the challeng that water-related disasters present to sustainable development and global eco-safety.

We recommend to:

devote the second half of the International Decade for Action "Water for life" to the enhancement of assistance to developing countries for water-related disaster reduction.

create regional and international special funds under the United Nations to tackle the barriers and constraints hampering access to safe drinking water for all and to render assistance to developing countries for water-related disaster risk reduction;

include water-related disaster risk reduction into national development agendas and budgeting frameworks, including the development and adoption of risk reduction and adaptation related policies, legislation, programs and action plans, as called for in the Hyogo Framework for Action;

accord highest priority to the development and implementation of national, regional and international strategies and action plans for water-related disaster risks reduction and management;

increase public and private investments in water-related disaster reduction, with a focus on infrastructure and human resources development;

strengthen the capacities in disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation in the countries affected and vulnerable to water-related disasters;

improve monitoring and assessment on water-related disasters in affected countries and regions based on reliable observing systems and updated data bases and drawing upon scientific evidence;

strengthen development assistance in disaster relief, with particular focus on the victims of water-related disasters;

give particular attention to solutions of the water problems in Central Asia countries, caused by drying of the Aral Sea, regional and global change, including climate and the increase of water-related disasters;

construct hydro-energy complexes based on expert assessments, with water reservoir that prevent floods and mud flows, reduce the impacts of droughts and produce energy, which contributes to the improvement of the social and economic living standards of the population.

disseminate and utilize international experience, knowledge and technology on water-related disasters risk reduction and management;

strengthen cooperation and partnership on water-related disaster risk reduction between affected countries, development partners and including international organizations;

increase *research on* the impacts of climate variability and change on water-related disasters, especially in Central Asia region in particular with the aim to develop adaptation strategies and mitigation measures;

engage the public in water-related risk reduction through public awareness-raising and people-centered early warning systems;

consider the possibility of establishing a Central Asian Centre on disasters risk reduction in Dushanbe.

We welcome the initiatives of the Republic of Tajikistan, in close cooperation with Central Asian countries, to:

- propose a high-level special event to be held during the UN General Assembly, devoted to discussions on the water-related issued at global level, and on concrete steps to resolve existing water problems, in particular water-related disasters;
- initiate the establishment of an international consortium on the prevention of the possible break of the mountainous Lake Sarez, which would have impacts on the livelihoods and safety of 6 million people in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and enable the use of its freshwater resources for water supply of millions of people in Central Asia;
- develop Central Asian Water Doctrine, taking into account universal principles of water policy with regard to water related disaster risk reduction, interests of all water consumers and water users, taking into account population growth, global climate change, environmental protection, poverty reduction and sustainable development;
- organize an international conference to review the outcomes of the first half of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" in Dushanbe, in 2010.

We agree that the Dushanbe Declaration will be submitted to the Davos IDRC 2008 and 5th World Water Forum. We also agree to bring the declaration to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and promote the declaration at national and international gatherings.

We express our sincere gratitude to the government and people of the Republic of Tajikistan for organizing this Conference, and their hospitality.

28 June 2008

Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan